

Lincoln Park Neighborhood Plan Advisory Group
Summary Meeting minutes
September 19, 2002

Members present: Wilma Bell, Ruth Brown, Merion Green, Lucinda Hall, Berneice Howard, Linda Martin, Tolulope Odunlami, Anita Summerour, Geraldine Evans Wilson

Staff: Chris Bartlett, Mayra Bayonet, Randy Clay, Jim Wasilak

Others: Virginia Cooper, Krista Middlebrooks (Mid-City Urban), George Young (RHE)

Opening Remarks/Administrative Items

Tolulope Odunlami opened the meeting, and reviewed the agenda. Jim Wasilak stated that the intended purpose of the meeting is to allow the Group to validate and prioritize the issues that have been raised by the community and the Advisory Group. Tolu reported on his attending the East Rockville Neighborhood Meeting, and explained that he had to point out to that group that he was not able to speak for the group when he was asked about the Maryvale Center on Lincoln Street. The East Rockville group discussed transportation and the Metro site, and Tolu stated that it might be helpful for those individuals to talk to the Lincoln park group. Other topics included landscaping, property maintenance and church expansion. Lucinda Hall noted that the Maryvale Center is an eyesore, and should be improved. Jim noted that improvements are being made, including additional landscaping and a new entrance. The owner will also install a fence along North Horners Lane and will make some spaces to be 15-minute parking. Chris Bartlett reported that the owner will be undertaking some improvements, including paving an area between the parking and building to locate an enclosed dumpster, enhanced lighting and painting the building. Merion Green asked whether the fence would include slats, to which Chris responded no. Berneice Howard asked whether the fence would be tall, to which Chris responded that it would not be. There may be an opportunity for plantings as well. Wilma Bell asked whether the problems would be shifted to the Mt. Calvary side, and Chris responded that the fence could be relocated on that side.

Jim stated that the minutes from the previous meeting were very important because they set out the basis of the Plan.

Master Plan Background

Jim stated that the purpose of the meeting was to go through the Community Kickoff meeting minutes, and to validate or dismiss the concerns that were raised in that document. Anita Summerour stated that businesses should be discouraged in a residential area, as there are several businesses operating from homes in the neighborhood. Jim stated that the home occupation regulations limit what can occur. Lucinda Hall stated that this is an enforcement issue. Merion Green and Wilma Bell pointed out instances where code enforcement has been lacking, especially construction that has occurred without building permits and on Saturdays. Blatant problems should be addressed at a minimum. Ms. Cooper expressed concerns were expressed about the new house being constructed on North Stonestreet Avenue, including traffic concerns.

George Young stated that Code Enforcement should probably be an objective of the Plan. Chris stated that the Group was really dealing with two issues in code enforcement: construction and new construction and property maintenance, with both items equally important. Jim pointed out that it would be helpful to have some code enforcement personnel at a future meeting, while Chris noted that some issues are relevant to the planning process, while specific issues should be dealt with by the inspector at a civic association meeting. Jim pointed out that many times education is important so that everyone knows what is required for property maintenance. Virginia Cooper stated that she would like to know what the code enforcement involves so she is knowledgeable. Jim stated that he would provide some information to the Group.

Wilma Bell stated that the group should probably devote some time to transportation issues. The Group brought out many concerns in the area of transportation, including:

- the concept of access versus cut-through, or that the neighborhood should be accessible but not be inviting to cut-through traffic;
- reconfiguring the Westmore Avenue/North Horners Lane/Ashley Avenue intersection, including appropriate signage such as “residential traffic only”, or restricting the times that turns can be made;
- the lack of enforcement of weight and speed limits on all streets;
- Industrial cut-through traffic. Suggestions were made to redirect industrial traffic away from the neighborhood, including the potential for Southlawn Lane to be one way or restricting turning movements in the industrial areas around Southlawn Lane so that traffic goes to Gude Drive.
- Concerns about Ride-On service, including enforcement of traffic laws, and the possibility for smaller, quieter buses. The Group discussed having a dialogue with the County on Ride-On;
- Safe school transportation for students, especially for heavily-traveled streets such as Rockville Pike, and the need for crossing guards. This was determined to be an issue to be discussed with the School Board, which should be invited to a meeting;
- The Group agreed that the City should continue to monitor and maintain Unity Bridge;
- The Group discussed whether cul-de-sacs are beneficial or detrimental to the neighborhood. Jim read a letter from residents on Ashley Avenue indicating support for a cul-de-sac on Ashley Avenue to eliminate cut-through and truck traffic.

The Group also discussed land use issues, including:

- Consider removing the industrial use on Frederick Avenue at Unity Bridge;
- Additional park space, that is both functional and usable open space for the community;
- Resubdivision of lots: discussion occurred that resubdivision of residential lots should be prohibited, especially pipestem lots. Some unattractive examples have been constructed recently, and given the long narrow lot sizes, there could be additional requests. This could also lead to some recommendations for minimum design guidelines for new construction. George Young expressed a concern that a resubdivision prohibition would limit redevelopment opportunities. Staff agreed to bring back some language to address this issue.

- Lincoln Terrace should be redeveloped with a range of incomes;
- That commercial uses should not be permitted in the area;
- Future land use of the WINX property. The Plan currently calls for residential use; Wilma stated that the new Plan should also include strong support for the annexation and future residential use. Virginia Cooper asked about the ownership of the property along Ashley Avenue. Jim explained that the property was owned by the VOB car dealerships, but that the partners that purchased the property are suing each other and the property's fate is undetermined. The property is not within the City limits, but must annex into the City if it is to develop with a use that requires public sewer and water. One of the partners is aware of the neighborhood plan process and is interested but is unknown whether who will retain control of the property. Jim mentioned that the prospective owner has been encouraged to provide residential uses and a buffer from the industrial area.

The Group discussed the drainage issues, and the interest in continuing the upgrades that have been made to date. The Group also agreed to not consider an issue noted on the Community Meeting report indicating that with increased diversity some of the history may be lost. Perhaps support for inclusiveness could be a part of the Plan. The Group discussed reaching out to Spanish-speaking residents so they can participate in the process. Staff agreed to provide the list of Spanish speaking residents to Geraldine Wilson.

Next Steps

The Group agreed that the next meeting would be held on October 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lincoln Park Community Center.

/rjw